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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL PHUM KPAO KMDR ZI
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION SUPREME COURT RULING ON ANZ
CHALLENGE OF AIPPA "TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE," PAPER; HARARE

¶1.   Under headline "Travesty of Justice" the independent
       weekly "The Standard" dedicated its September 14
       editorial to dismissing Chief Justice Godfrey
       Chidyausiku's ruling on the Associated Newspapers of
       Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of Zimbabwe's only
       independent daily "The Daily News" and its sister
       weekly "The Daily News on Sunday," challenge of
       certain sections of the controversial Access to
       Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in
       the Supreme Court as "a travesty of justice."
       Excerpts:

¶2.   "We had long decided to comment on the ruling by Chief
       Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku to point out that his statement
       was likely to be interpreted by government security agents
       as an invitation to once and for all destroy the private
       press and "The Daily News," which the governing party has
       considered an irritant for years. . .Thursday's ruling by
       Chief Justice Chidyausiku that by not registering with the
       government-appointed Media and Information Commission, the
       Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ). . .was operating
       illegally, is a dangerous ruling. It is dangerous because
       it has not taken long for enemies of free expression to
       pounce on `The Daily News' - by crudely shutting down its
       operations and forcing its printers to stop working. In
       fact, the Chidyausiku ruling has larger implications to the
       media in Zimbabwe: in one stroke of the pen, it gives the
       Media and Information Commission the legality it so badly
       strove for, to move and frustrate Zimbabwe's vibrant but
       small private media. . .However one reads Mr. Chidyausiku's
       ruling, it is a travesty of justice.

SULLIVAN